

Moslems, just beginning to ask for God's Word, that they cannot have it—that the great Church of America has too much to do to think of 60,000,000 of Arabic-speaking people and 140,000,000 more of Moslems whose Koran is in Arabic.

The question is a simple one. We need about \$9,000 this year to keep up Bible work and manufacture to an extent sufficient for the demand.

Will the Christian Church give it? Shall foreign missionaries from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and Scandinavia, who have depended upon us for their Arabic Scriptures, be obliged to write to their home societies that the American Bible Press in Beirut, which holds the key

to the Arabic Bible, has finally admitted its inability to supply their increasing demands upon it?

We commend to your Board the able annual report of Mr. S.G. Freyer, on Bible Society work and its needs.

We call upon the Bible-loving Church of Christ to come to your aid and ours. We read of unexampled commercial prosperity at home. Truly the silver and gold *are the Lord's*. Let his servants and stewards know the needs of our work, and the present pressing importance of sending the Bible wherever the Koran is known and read.

On behalf of the Syrian Mission,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY H. JESSUP.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE BRAZIL AGENCY.

IN view of the fact that the American Bible Society is about to celebrate the Ninetieth Anniversary of its splendid history in the world-wide dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, a short historical sketch of the Society's work in Brazil has been prepared.

It must be borne in mind in the first place that the Society's operations in Brazil cover a period of nearly seventy years, though the regular Agency was only established in the year 1876, and consequently embraces about thirty years. Previous to 1836 the Society had consigned a few copies of the Scriptures to foreign merchants residing on the coast of Brazil, and these had been judiciously distributed.

de Janeiro December 23, 1837, by the Rev. Justin Spaulding, in which he says he had already distributed all the Bibles and Testaments sent him, and that he was sure the American Bible Society would send him more. The writer refers also to letters written by Rev. Dr. P. Kidder dated from Rio January 13 and 29, 1838 in which he reports the sales of Bibles in Portuguese and Latin as having greatly increased. The author has one paragraph headed

"A LIBERAL DONATION.

"BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK, March 9, 1838.

"Rev. NATHAN BANGS, D.D., *Cor. Sec'y of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church:*

"Sir—With this goes a box containing 75 Portuguese Bibles and 25 Testaments, a gift from the Directors of the American Bible Society for your missionaries in Brazil, etc.

"JOSEPH HYDE,
"General Agent American Bible Society."

Mr. Kidder reports "Copies exposed for sale and advertised in the newspapers found many purchasers, not only from the city but also from the distant provinces. At the mission house many copies were distributed gratuitously; and on several occasions there was what might be called a rush

of applicants for the sacred volume. One of these occurred soon after my arrival. It was known that a supply of books had been received, and our house was literally thronged with persons of all ages and condi-



RIO DE JANEIRO, LOOKING TOWARD THE HARBOR

In a curious old book in the Portuguese language, entitled "The Catholic and the Methodist," written by the priest, Luiz Goncalves dos Santos, in the year 1838, there is a quotation from a letter dated from Rio

tions of life—from the gray-headed man to the prattling child; from the gentleman in high life to the poor slave. Most of the children and servants came as messengers, bringing notes from their parents or masters. These notes were invariably couched in respectful, and often in beseeching, language. Several were from poor widows who had no money to buy books for their children, but who desired Testaments for them to read at school. Another was from one of the ministers of the imperial government, asking for a supply for an entire school out of the city.

"Among the gentlemen who called in person were several principals of colleges and many students of different grades. Versions in French, and also in English, as well as Portuguese, were sometimes desired by amateur linguists. We dealt out the precious volumes according to our best judgment, with joy and with trembling. This being the first general movement of the kind, we were at times inclined to fear that some plan had been concerted for getting the books destroyed, or for involving us in some species of difficulty. These apprehensions were contradicted, however, by all the circumstances within our observation; and all who came made their errand on the ground of its intrinsic importance, and listened with deep attention to whatever we had time or ability to address to them concerning Christ and the Bible.

"Some instances of the happy and immediate effects of circulating the Bible came to our knowledge; but it is reserved for eternity to reveal the full extent of the benefit. While subsequently traveling in distant provinces, I found that the sacred volumes put in circulation at Rio de Janeiro had sometimes gone before me, and wherever they went an interest had been awakened which led the people to seek for more."

Again, describing a voyage down the southern Brazilian coast, he writes: "The sea was smooth, the passengers were all upon deck, and the best of feeling pervaded the whole company. Wishing to profit by the occasion, I descended to my trunk and brought up a Portuguese Bible, which I offered to a passenger on the condition laid down in the rules of the American Bible Society. Only a few moments elapsed ere I had disposed of all the volumes of the Sacred Word which were at my convenience, and on every side my fellow-voyagers were reading with eagerness a book they had never seen before. From time to time I was

called on for explanations, and I was renewedly convinced of the freedom from bigotry which is a distinguishing negative quality of the Brazilians. An officer of the imperial navy had just returned from the



A STREET IN RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazilian squadron at the river Plate, and, in seeking the bosom of his family at Santos, wished the Scriptures as a present for his children, and, when purchasing them, he remarked, 'Though I am forty-five years of age, I have never before seen a Holy Bible in a language which I could understand.'

In giving an account of his most interesting visit to the house of a Roman Catholic priest in the province of São Paulo, he says: "On showing me his library—a very respectable collection of books—he distinguished as his favorite work, Calmet's Bible, in French, in twenty-six volumes. He had no Bible or Testament in Portuguese. I told him I had heard that an edition was about to be published at Rio, with notes and comments, under the patronage and sanction of the archbishop. This project had been set on foot in order to counteract the circulation of the editions of the Bible societies, but was never carried into effect. He knew nothing of it. He had heard, however, that Bibles in the vulgar tongue had been sent to Rio de Janeiro, as to other parts of the world, which could be procured gratis, or for a trifling consideration. Judge of the happy surprise when I heard from his lips that some of these Bibles had already appeared in this neighborhood, three hundred miles distant from our depository at Rio. His first remark was that he did not know how much good would come from their perusal, on account of the bad example of their bishops and priests. I informed him frankly that I

was one of the persons engaged in distributing these Bibles, and endeavored to explain the motives of our enterprise, which he seemed to appreciate."

Mr. Kidder further relates very interesting interviews had with the Andradas, with Señor Martin Francisco, president of the Provincial Assembly, and with Señor Antonio Carlos, chairman of the Committee on Public Instruction. The latter presented to the Honorable Legislature, the Provincial Assembly of the Imperial Province of São Paulo, a proposition in which the following occurs:

"Whereas, Having relations with the American Bible Society, located in New York, the fundamental object of which is to distribute the Word of God, without note or comment, in different parts of the world; and,

"Whereas, The new Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is a choice specimen of style, as well on subject historical as moral and religious, in addition to embodying the pure and sacred truths of our holy Christianity, the knowledge of which is of so high importance to every individual, both as a human being and a member of society; and,

"Whereas, Having the most unlimited confidence in the philanthropic benevolence of said Society, and its willingness to co-operate for the good of this country, in common with all others, and especially in view of the happy relations existing between two prominent nations of the new world: therefore, I propose to guarantee, on the part of the said American Bible Society, the free donation of copies of the New Testament, translated into Portuguese by the Padre Antonio Pereira de Figueiredo, in sufficient number to furnish every primary school in the province with a library of one dozen, on the simple condition that said copies shall be received as delivered at the Custom House of Rio de Janeiro and caused to be distributed among, preserved in, and used by, the said several schools as books of general reading and instruction for the pupils of the same.

"With the most sincere desires for the moral and civil prosperity of the imperial province of São Paulo, the above proposition is humbly and respectfully submitted.

D. P. KIDDER.

"CITY OF SAO PAULO, February 15, 1839."

The following reply was given:

"TO MR. KIDDER:

"I inform you that the Legislative Assembly has received with especial satisfaction your offer of copies of the New Testament, translated by the Padre Antonio Pereira de Figueiredo, and that the Legislature will enter into a deliberation upon the subject, the result of which will be communicated to you.

"God preserve you!

"MIGUEL EUFRAZIO DE AZEVEDO MARQUEZ,

"Secretary.

"PALACE OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY,
SAO PAULO, February 20, 1839."

The Rev. James C. Fletcher writes: "I visited

São Paulo for the first time sixteen years after the events narrated above, and I found the same willingness manifested by all ranks of society in the reception of the Word which my companion in authorship experienced there. I was thus enabled to diffuse very many copies of Holy Writ. From time to time, in this pleasant portion of Brazil, I found much to encourage my labors among the humble and ignorant as well as among the more elevated and intelligent. It was not less pleasing occasionally to trace the working of the seeds of truth sown so many years before by Dr. Kidder. I found that an eminent Brazilian had been won by the perusal of a Holy Bible to become the earnest advocate of its circulation. Far in the interior of this province I met with two gentlemen who did not profess to be Christians, but who, as philanthropists, took a deep interest in the Bible cause. One of them told me that a Brazilian came to him a few days before with a Portuguese Bible, saying that he was so rejoiced to have the Bible in his own vernacular. This Bible must have come either from my predecessor or from the stock left with an American merchant in Rio de Janeiro. I was also informed by an English watchmaker at Campinas that he had met with a Brazilian who had in his possession a Portuguese Bible which he took pleasure in carrying with him to the Roman Catholic church each Sunday."

The American Bible Society continued to make occasional consignments of Scriptures in this way to one person and to another in Brazil through a period of about thirty years, until the year 1876, when the regular Agency was established. It would require considerable time to go through the records at the Bible House to know just how many copies of Scriptures the Society did send to Brazil from the beginning up to the year 1876. There can be no doubt that the American Society distributed in Brazil some thousands of copies of the Scriptures during that time. From time to time Bibles have been found about the coast towns and far in the interior that were known to have been distributed in Brazil before regular Agencies of either Bible Society were established.

During the first period (of about twenty years from 1855 to 1876) of missionary effort, occasional consignments of Scriptures were made to the missionaries by the Bible Society. The copies of the Word then put into circulation, in addition to those distributed by merchants from time to time and by the Methodist pioneers from 1836 to 1842, were as seed sown in good soil. The results achieved in this way led to the establishment of the regular Brazil Agency in 1876, through which aggressive, systematic colportage and Bible distribution have been carried on for thirty years; and in which time more than 550,000 copies of the Scriptures have been put into circulation. It would be safe to estimate that the American Bible Society has caused to be circulated in Brazil at least 600,000 copies of the Word of God. Now if we es-

timate that the British and Foreign Bible Society has circulated an equal number, and that the National Bible Society of Scotland and others, together with private enterprises and efforts, have in various ways during these years furnished Gospel workers and readers in Brazil 100,000 copies, we have a total of 1,300,000 copies of the Scriptures put into the hands of the Brazilians up to the close of the year 1905, or at the beginning of the Ninetieth Anniversary of the American Bible Society.

A liberal estimate, based upon the last official census, give to Brazil, of her 18,000,000 inhabitants, about 4,000,000 who can read. If every copy of the 1,300,000 circulated had been preserved and was in use to-day, there would still be 2,700,000 persons who can read in Brazil without a copy of the Bible, to say nothing of the 12,000,000 who have no knowledge of letters as yet. The mere mention of these figures is sufficient to indicate the great work yet to be done before each reading inhabitant of the country may possess a copy

of the Scriptures. Substantial progress is being made in educating the masses, and an ever increasing number of the illiterate 12,000,000 is learning to read, so that a larger field opens up before the Society and a weightier responsibility rests upon the Brazil Agency.

Figures cannot, and words can only in part, tell the whole story of the work done by the Bible Society's employees as they have gone forth through this broad land for thirty years scattering the precious seed. The story has in part been written from time to time in the *Bible Society Record*, the annual reports from the Agency, the missionary periodicals, and other literature; but the final results can only be fully known in that Great Day when he who alone is worthy shall open that other book and loose the seals thereof, and the redeemed from Brazil shall join the ransomed hosts in saying, "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing and the honor, and the glory and the dominion, for ever and ever."

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

PERSIA AND ITS BIBLE NEEDS.

THE Rev. Fred. N. Jessup, Presbyterian Missionary in Tabriz, writes as follows. All Presbyterians will be specially interested, but we trust all who care for the old Bible land will care for its needs also:

I am extremely sorry to hear that there is so much difficulty in your work on the financial side. I do hope it will be possible for you to send us the same generous grant of \$200 which you have in the past, for this year we are in worse straits financially than for a good while. While the prospects and opportunities for work are unusually bright this year, especially for work among Moslems, our station has been cut down some \$500, and this when we were already down to the bottom in our figures. Consequently we hardly know what we are to do. Though this is the best opportunity in our work for getting a real hold on the Armenian girls, and though this year there have been more applications, and from a better class of girls, than for years, it looks as though we should have to abandon the department or else stop, practically, all evangelistic touring for the rest of the year.

Then there is the case of the pastor of the Tabriz Church. For years this has been the great need of the church—a native pastor to look after the flock and try to draw together the very different elements in it. At last, this spring, as in answer to prayer, the man has been sent—an earnest, spiritual man, with quite an ideal pastor's wife. There is already a better spirit noticeable, and we are hoping for the beginning of much greater things this year in the church life. But meanwhile the request for a grant to help pay the

pastor's salary has been refused, or rather we are told there is no hope of its being granted.

I do not mean to complain, because, of course, we know that many fields are being thus forced to retrench. But I should like you to see how we are situated. I fear it will not be possible for us to keep the Bible depot open or to pay its rent unless the American Bible Society can continue its grant to us of the \$200 as in the past. I trust we shall not have to abandon our place in the bazaar, which we have had now for some twenty years, I believe. Possession is nine-tenths of the law in Persia, and it is hard for them to close a place so long open, but if we were forced to give it up ourselves because we could not pay the rent, it would be next to impossible again to secure as good a place, if any, for selling God's Word in the bazaars.

You will see that the number of Bibles and of Testaments sold is greater than in the previous report, that of April, 1904. The total sold is less, owing to the much smaller number of portions which were disposed of. This is, I believe, chiefly because we have not had the portions on hand to sell. As you will see from the enclosed request for a grant of Scriptures, we are greatly in need of portions of the Bible, especially in Azebaijan Turkish, and also in Persian and Armenian. In giving away Scriptures to Mohammedans or those who know little about the Bible, it seems much wiser to give or to sell a single Gospel, for then the person is much more apt to read and reread and really get the meaning. Then later one can give him another portion or a Testament.

In the column "Funds" you will notice that more has been received from the sale of Scriptures than in